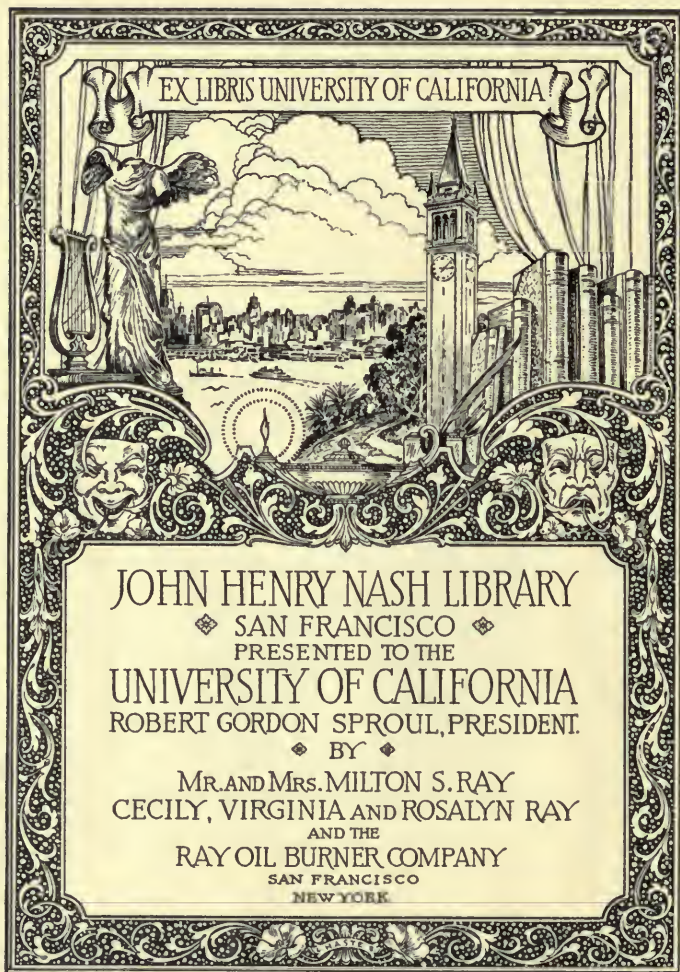


EDWIN KLEBER WOOD

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EDWIN KLEBER WOOD



"FATHER" IN NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN. TAKEN
IN THE YARD OF OUR SON FRED'S HOME AT
SOUTH BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

A SKETCH
OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF
EDWIN KLEBER WOOD

BY
MARIAN S. WOOD
HIS WIFE



PRIVATELY PRINTED
BY JOHN HENRY NASH
SAN FRANCISCO

1918

THAT OUR GRANDCHILDREN MAY KNOW
SOMETHING OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF THEIR
GRANDFATHER, I HAVE WRITTEN
FOR THEM THIS LITTLE
SKETCH.



EDWIN KLEBER WOOD was the only son of Cheney and Laura Brown Wood, and was born in Eagle, Wyoming County, New York, February 17, 1840. "Father"—as I always called him—had two sisters,—Helen, the wife of Peter Lucas, and Theresa, the wife of Robert Wallace. His boyhood was spent at Gainesville, New York, on a farm, and his education was obtained in a district school and at Pike Seminary, located at Pike, Wyoming County, New York.

In 1861 he entered the Civil War as a private in Company K, Seventeenth New York Volunteer Infantry. During the war he was wounded at Hanover Court House. He served until the regiment was dismissed from service, being discharged June 2, 1863, as Corporal.

After he returned from the war he taught for a short time in district schools in the townships

of Pike and Gainesville, but he was restless and wanted to go West, where he felt a young man would have greater opportunities.

In 1865 he started for Iowa to engage in the industry of sheep-raising. On the train he met Mr. Stanton (for whom Stanton, Michigan, is named), who persuaded him to visit Stanton with the idea of settling there. Father was so pleased with the outlook that he decided to remain instead of going on to Iowa. Here he taught in the Union School, returning to Gainesville for a few months the latter part of 1866.

On January 30, 1867, Father and I were married at my father's home at East Pike. There had been a heavy snow-storm which blocked the roads to such an extent that it was impossible for sleighs to make their way through the snow-drifts. Father was therefore obliged to walk from Castile, a distance of five miles, picking his way as well as he could over the drifts. His parents and sister Helen were unable to come, on account of the impassable roads. The minister who married us came on horseback. Our wedding was a very quiet one,



PICTURES TAKEN SHORTLY BEFORE OUR MARRIAGE

only my father and mother, my brother Clarence, the minister, and a neighbor, Mrs. George Knapp, who had come to help during the day, being present. We were married at two o'clock in the afternoon. My mother was in bed all day with a severe headache, and I cooked the turkey dinner. Father and I spent the night at my home, the following day going to visit Father's parents at Gainesville.

In a few days we left for Stanton. Upon reaching there we began our married life in a small house standing on a little piece of ground which had been cleared by Father. All around us was a dense pine forest. In the yard were several stumps. One, directly in front of our front door, we had to walk over in order to get into the yard.

Our house stood by itself, perhaps a quarter of a mile from the Union Schoolhouse and the other half-dozen houses which at that time made up the town. There were footpaths in the town but no roads. One of these paths led to our house. The house was composed of a sitting-room, two bedrooms, and a "lean-to" kitchen. In one of the bedrooms was a cupboard in which food was kept.



STANTON AS I FIRST KNEW IT. OUR OWN LITTLE HOUSE IS NOT SHOWN IN THE
PICTURE BUT WAS A SHORT DISTANCE TO THE RIGHT

The "lean-to" was so low that it was impossible to stand erect in it. Theresa, Father's sister, who had been teaching in Stanton and had kept house for Father, was living in the house when we returned and remained with us for a year, when she was married to Robert Wallace. There was no church in the town. However, every Sunday morning religious services were conducted in the schoolhouse by ministers from various denominations, and about twenty-five residents attended. The small organ in the schoolhouse was played by Theresa.

Before Father left Stanton for New York, he and Giles Gilbert, a boyhood friend who was with Father in the war, had taken a contract for the State road extending five miles north from Stanton through the pine forest. Building this road meant pioneering in the strictest sense of the word. It was necessary to employ several men to help in cutting down the trees and in laying the "corduroy" road, so called because of the resemblance to corduroy of the rails of which the road was built. For the accommodation of the men em-

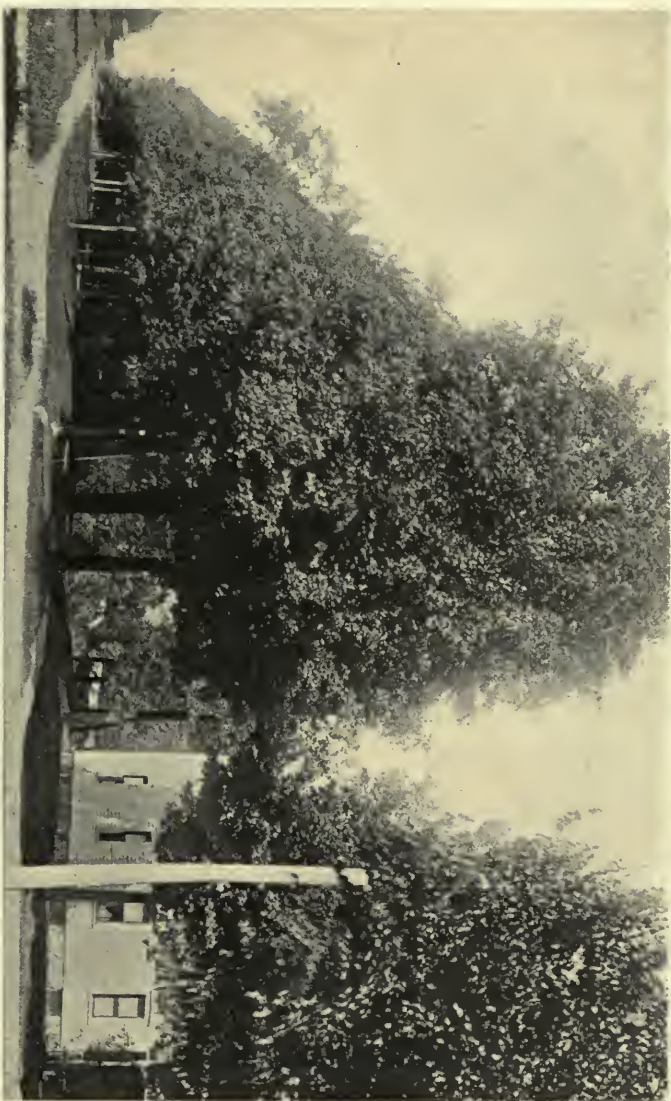
ployed on the road Father and Giles put up a general provision and merchandise store, hauling the supplies twenty-two miles from Ionia, with an ox-team. After the road was completed Father and Giles built a lumber mill at Derby Lake, two miles from Stanton. The products from the mill were taken to Ionia by an ox-team. About this time Father and Giles purchased a cranberry marsh. On this marsh thirty boys and girls picked three hundred barrels of cranberries during the one season which we owned the marsh, and every day the children worked we gave them their lunches.

On July 2, 1869, our first child, Frederick John, was born.

In 1870 we moved to Sherman City, where Father had built a grocery store. To make the journey, it was necessary to drive forty miles through an unbroken country. With our year-and-a-half-old baby we left Stanton early in the morning, in a two-horse lumber wagon. The road was extremely rough and the baby cried constantly. His father was therefore obliged to walk and carry the baby in his arms. Now and then we changed

our occupation, Father driving the team, and I walking and carrying the baby. Carefully picking our way over stumps and logs, we finally reached Sherman City but late at night. We began our life here in a two-story house of two rooms—a living-room below and a bedroom above—which Father had built before we left Stanton. Immediately he erected a store, placing Amos Johnson, a young boy from Wyoming County, New York, in charge. In putting up the store, we had a “raising,” twenty-five or thirty men helping us. Estelle Johnson, Amos’s wife, and I prepared the dinner for them.

We were certainly living in the wilds. All around Sherman City were Indians who often came to the store to “swap” berries for flour. One day Father shot a deer from the store door. I also remember that one morning a baby bear leisurely wandered into the store. Amos and Mr. Ellis, who owned the boarding-house, petted “Cub,” as the bear was at once named, and he soon came to feel at home with us. In the daytime he stayed in the store and at night was tied outside.



OUR "REMODELED" HOME IN STANTON

During the year a cyclone occurred which carried goods of all kinds from the store out into the woods and surrounding country. A child in a neighbor's house was swung across the room and landed on a hook in the wall, hanging there by his clothes. A gust of wind blew open two doors in Amos Johnson's house and carried the iron tea-kettle from the kitchen, through one of the open doors, several feet away, to the yard outside. During the storm pine trees were laid low, resembling grain when cut by a cradle or a harvester.

In about two years we returned to Stanton.

On May 6, 1871, our little girl, Blandie Theresa, was born. She lived only three months, passing away August 21st.

Our Stanton store had gradually increased its business and by 1874 was carrying a full line of drugs and groceries. Father now had so many interests that he found it necessary to have more assistance. He therefore asked my brother Clarence to help him in the store at Stanton. The business association thus begun between the two continued, with the exception of two years spent



THE FIRST OFFICE OF OUR FIRM IN SAN FRANCISCO

by my brother in Kansas, to the time of Father's death. As the years passed, Father more and more relied upon my brother's judgment, and gradually placed in my brother's hands the details of the business.

On June 23, 1875, our second son, Walter Thayer, was born.

During this year Father bought a mill,—later known as "Wood's Mill," between Stanton and McBride. The land in this locality from which trees were cut and manufactured in the mill into lumber and shingles is now divided up into valuable farms.

In 1880 Mr. Orsen M. Kellogg began working for Father at Wood's Mill, six years later coming to Washington, where he has been with the firm ever since.

About 1884, Mr. Spencer E. Slade, who had been with Father in our Stanton store, came to Washington to look into timber investments, a short time later coming to San Francisco and opening an office at 18 Market Street under the name of "S. E. Slade and Company."

Father made several trips to the Pacific Coast about this time and invested quite heavily in fir timber in Washington.

Father had become interested in civic matters, and in 1885 he was elected on the Republican ticket as Representative from the First District of Montcalm County to the Michigan State Legislature, receiving 2,156 votes to 1,807 cast for Aaron B. Brown, the Fusion candidate.

After Father returned from the Legislature we moved to our farm at McBride. Shortly afterwards Father bought the "Windsor Mill" at McBride. For several years he gave his attention to manufacturing lumber in this mill, and also to running a branch store at McBride, under the name of "Wood and Thayer."

In 1888 my brother joined our Company in San Francisco. A short time afterwards the Company opened a wholesale lumber yard in San Francisco, at the foot of Spear Street.

About 1889 our son Fred entered Father's business. He and Father bought the "Townline Lake Mill" and Fred remained in charge until 1891,

when the property was sold and Fred became one of our force in San Francisco.

In 1890 the Company built at Hoquiam, Washington, the first of our ships, the schooner *E. K. Wood*, a four-mast sailing vessel.

In 1891 we moved from McBride to Oakland.

In 1892 Father bought a mill at Hoquiam, which ever since has been operated by the Company.

In 1895 the "E. K. Wood Lumber Company" was incorporated in San Francisco, with offices at 10 California Street, where ever since the firm has carried on a wholesale business. On account, however, of the renumbering of streets after the earthquake and fire, in 1906, the office address was changed to 112 Market Street. Father was elected president at the time of the Company's incorporation and held the position until his death.

Shortly after its incorporation the Company opened a wholesale yard at Redondo, California, later moving to San Pedro, and opening a yard in Los Angeles.

In 1900 Father bought a saw-mill at Bellingham,



FROM A GROUP PICTURE TAKEN
AT OUR "GOLDEN WEDDING" AT PASTORI'S HOTEL
AT FAIRFAX

Washington, our son Fred moving there to take charge. Afterwards Father purchased considerable fir timber in that vicinity.

In 1900, also, our son Walter became one of the force in our San Francisco office.

In 1904 we moved from Oakland to San Francisco. We remained there a year, when we moved to San Rafael and stayed there about a year.

In 1906 the firm closed out their wholesale yard in San Francisco. Later they moved to a new location in Oakland, and also opened yards at San Anselmo and San Rafael. Our business had gradually grown, and at the time Father passed away about a thousand men were employed by the firm and a dozen vessels controlled by it.

In this year also we built our present home at San Anselmo.

While we were living in East Oakland Father and I joined the Brooklyn Presbyterian Church. From then until he passed away he was active in church work and was interested in the Presbyterian Orphanage and Farm at San Anselmo.

On January 30, 1917, we celebrated our fiftieth



OUR SAN ANSELMO HOME IN NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTEEN

wedding anniversary. Several times we had spoken of observing the day, but Father had been so miserable during the winter that we had abandoned the idea. As the time drew near our children insisted that if their father felt at all equal to meeting a little group of relatives and friends, the celebration must take place. Father at last consented, and afterwards was glad that the children had taken matters into their own hands. Many times during the following months of his illness he expressed his enjoyment of the occasion and his appreciation of the various gifts and messages which we received. On account of his condition we did not feel that we could hold the celebration at our home, and instead had our dinner and little reception at Pastori's Hotel at Fairfax.

During the last three years of his life Father was far from well, having several severe illnesses, and gradually grew weaker, until he passed away from a serious stomach trouble on July 30, 1917.

The funeral service was held at our home in San Anselmo on Wednesday, August 1st, with

an attendance of many friends from the Bay region and the employees of the Company in San Francisco, San Rafael and San Anselmo, who came in a body. Our pastor, the Rev. Charles L. Duncan, of the First Presbyterian Church of San Anselmo, and Dr. Warren H. Landon, president of the San Francisco Theological Seminary at San Anselmo, conducted the service. On Sunday, August 5th, a memorial service was held for Father in our church.

We received many telegrams and letters of condolence from family friends and business associates of Father's, and memorials from various firms.

Of all the messages of sympathy and esteem none was more gratifying to me than the following paragraph from the resolutions adopted by the Douglas Fir Club:

"In all the varied relations of his active life he earned the esteem of his associates by his quiet gentleness and reserve force, his fairness and generosity. He translated into the terms of every-day life his ideals of justice, faith, duty and honor."

Or this, from *The Pioneer Western Lumberman* of August 1, 1917:

"No firm has a higher standing for honor and integrity than the E. K. Wood Lumber Company, of which E. K. Wood was the founder and active manager for over a quarter of a century."

In writing this sketch I have wanted our grandchildren to know something of the life and work of their grandfather. As I look back over our fifty years and six months of life together,—years in which a discordant note never entered,—I find it difficult to express in a few words Father's strongest characteristics. While he was always engrossed in his business, yet he was never too busy to see his friends or to be of help to others. His reserve, gentleness, kindness, honesty, genuineness, unostentatiousness, strong sense of justice, and his consideration for others are some of the characteristics which those who knew him best remember.

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JOHN HENRY NASH



